



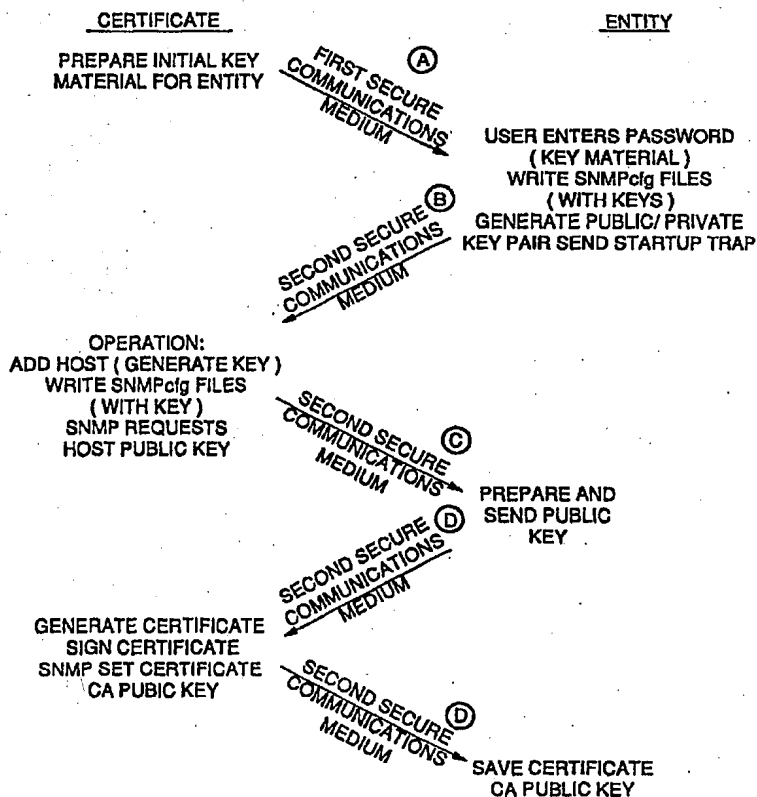
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(54) Title: PROTECTED DISTRIBUTION PROTOCOL FOR KEYING AND CERTIFICATE MATERIAL

(57) Abstract

Disclosed is a computer system and a method for the protected distribution of certificate and keying material between a certification authority and at least one entity in the certification authority's domain, comprising the steps of sending keying material, including a password, generated by the Certifying Authority to the entity via a secure medium; generating and protecting, by the entity, a public and a private key pair using the keying material provided it by the certifying authority; generating, protecting and sending a request for a certificate to the certifying authority using the keying material provided it by the certifying authority; requesting, by the certifying authority, that the public key and address of the entity be sent to the certifying authority; protecting and sending the public key and address of the entity to the certifying authority using the keying material provided it by the certifying authority; assembling and issuing the certificate to the entity from the certifying authority and recording the public key of the entity at the certifying authority for public use within the domain of the certifying authority.



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**PROTECTED DISTRIBUTION PROTOCOL
FOR KEYING AND CERTIFICATE MATERIAL**

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates in general to computer security systems, and, more particularly, to a computer security system and a method for the protected distribution of certificate and keying material between a certification authority and an entity in the certification authority's domain.

2. Description of the Related Art

In existing methods for distribution of certificate and keying material, the administrator must manually distribute the information to each end system (entity) and user. Administrators in the past were required to visit each system or user on the system more than once to initialize the information required to support the network security mechanism.

The certificate or keying material is used later to authenticate and to protect the communications between distributed entities. If these materials are compromised in the initial distribution, then the confidentiality and authentication services cannot be assured during further operation.

This manual distribution system is further fraught with difficulties in maintaining security in the physical transportation of the keying materials between the Certification Authority and the various entities, and with the consequent time lag mandated by the actual wait times involved in moving from one entity to the other. All during this setup time, the various entities are denied access to the protected data for which they may have an immediate need.

The present invention meets and overcomes this problem of maintaining security during the transfer of the keying

1 materials between entities and shortens the time during
2 which access is denied an otherwise authorized entity to a
3 minimum.

4 The present invention reduces the required visits
5 needed to install the necessary security access software to
6 a single visit by using a password (shared secret) to
7 generate the essential keying material to be used for both
8 integrity and encryption services to protect the data
9 necessary for authentication and network security protocol
10 protection.

11 OBJECTS AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

12 Therefore, it is an object of the present invention to
13 provide a computer security network system and a method for
14 the protected distribution of certificate and keying
15 material between a certification authority and an entity in
16 the certification authority's domain.

17 It is still another object of the present invention to
18 provide a method and system that quickly provides
19 authorized users control of their data.

20 It is another object of the present invention to
21 provide a method and system that facilitates, rather than
22 prevents, the establishment of encoded public and private
23 key data or documents classified at different security
24 levels.

25 The present invention provides a computer system and
26 a method for the protected distribution of certificate and
27 keying material between a certification authority and an
28 entity in the certification authority's domain by
29 establishing a shared secret and using it to protect the
30 data transferred between the entity and the certifying
31 authority.

32 The novel features of construction and operation of
33 the invention will be more clearly apparent during the
34 course of the following description, reference being had to
35 the accompanying drawings wherein has been illustrated a
36 preferred form of the device of the invention and wherein

1 like characters of reference designate like parts
2 throughout the drawings.

3 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

4 FIGURE 1 is a block diagram flowchart showing the
5 general overall logic flow through a system incorporating
6 the present invention.

7 DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

8 A preferred form of the invention as embodied in a
9 method and computing system for providing for the protected
10 distribution of certificate and keying material between a
11 certification authority and an entity in the certification
12 authority's domain by establishing a shared secret and
13 using it to protect the data transferred between the entity
14 and the certifying authority.

15 In general, as shown in FIGURE 1, the invention is
16 found in a computer system operating over a network in
17 accord with the following steps outlined below in detail to
18 provide for the protected distribution of certificate and
19 keying material between a certification authority and at
20 least one entity in the certification authority's domain.

21 The certifying authority begins by generating and
22 sending keying material, including a password, to the
23 subject entity via a first secure communications medium.
24 In this instance, the most secure communications medium is
25 a non-electronic medium, such as a manual courier, secure
26 mail or other secure communications medium that is distinct
27 from the computer system over which the keying material is
28 to be used as described later in authenticating the entity
29 to the certifying authority.

30 Once the entity receives the keying material from the
31 certifying authority, it then generates a public and a
32 private key pair and protects the public key using the
33 keying material provided it by the certifying authority.

34 The entity now generates and protects a request for a
35 certificate to the certifying authority by using the keying

1 material provided it by the certifying authority. Once
2 generated and protected, the request is sent to the
3 certifying authority via a second secure communications
4 medium connecting the certifying authority with the
5 entities in its certifying domain.

6 Once the certifying authority receives the request
7 from the entity, the certifying authority authenticates the
8 identity of the requesting entity. This is done by
9 requesting, via the second secure communications medium,
10 that the public key and address of the entity be sent to
11 the certifying authority.

12 The requesting entity, having received the
13 authentication request from the certifying authority,
14 protects the transmission of its selected public key and
15 address to the certifying authority via the second secure
16 communications medium, by using the keying material
17 provided by the certifying authority.

18 Once the identity of the requesting entity is
19 confirmed, the certifying authority then assembles and
20 issues the requested certificate to the entity via the
21 second secure communications medium, and records the public
22 key of the entity at the certifying authority for public
23 use by other entities within the certifying domain of the
24 certifying authority.

25 The invention described above is, of course,
26 susceptible to many variations, modifications and changes,
27 all of which are within the skill of the art. It should be
28 understood that all such variations, modifications and
29 changes are within the spirit and scope of the invention
30 and of the appended claims. Similarly, it will be
31 understood that Applicant intends to cover and claim all
32 changes, modifications and variations of the example of the
33 preferred embodiment of the invention herein disclosed for
34 the purpose of illustration which do not constitute
35 departures from the spirit and scope of the present
36 invention.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for the protected distribution of
2 certificate and keying material between a certification
3 authority and at least one entity in the certification
4 authority's domain via a communications medium connecting
5 the certification authority and entities in its domain,
6 comprising the steps of:

7 sending keying material, including a password,
8 generated by the certifying authority to the entity via a
9 first secure communications medium;

10 generating and protecting, by the entity, a public and
11 a private key pair using the keying material provided the
12 entity by the certifying authority;

13 generating, protecting and sending via a second secure
14 communications medium a request for a certificate to the
15 certifying authority using the keying material provided the
16 entity by the certifying authority;

17 requesting, by the certifying authority via the second
18 secure communications medium, that the public key and
19 address of the entity be sent to the certifying authority;

20 protecting and sending the public key and address of
21 the entity to the certifying authority via the second
22 secure communications medium using the keying material
23 provided it by the certifying authority;

24 assembling and issuing the certificate to the entity
25 from the certifying authority via the second secure
26 communications medium and recording the public key of the
27 entity at the certifying authority for public use within
28 the domain of the certifying authority.

1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of sending
2 keying material, including a password, generated by the
3 certifying authority to the entity via a first secure
4 communications medium further includes the step of:
5 selecting the first secure communications medium that is
6 separate and independent from the second secure
7 communications medium.

1 3. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of sending
2 keying material, including a password, generated by the
3 certifying authority to the entity via a first secure
4 communications medium further includes the step of:
5 selecting a non-electronic transmission medium for the
6 first secure communications medium.

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